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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 05147 041756Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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O 041645Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8979

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 5147

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM MURPHY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, SY, UR, LE
SUBJECT: SOVIET ROLE IN LEBANON

1. I PRESENTED AGREED TALKING POINTS ON SOVIET ROLE IN LEBANON (RCI 21302 OF 31 JULY) TO FONMIN KHADDAM AUGUST 3. THROUGHOUT MY PRESENTATION KHADDAM REPEATEDLY NODDED IN VIGOROUS AGREEMENT.

2. SAID I RECOGNIZED THAT IT UNLIKELY HE WOULD HAVE BEEN SURPRISED BY ANY OF THE MATERIAL I HAD REPORTED ON BECAUSE WE KNEW SYRIA WAS WATCHING THE SITUATION CLOSELY. SYRIA IN SOME CASES PROBABLY HAD EVEN MORE DETAILS THAN WE DID, GIVEN ITS MANY OBSERVERS IN LEBANON. HE SHOULD REGARD MY PRESENTATION IN ANY CASE AS A SAMPLE OF OUR OBSERVATIONS. WE THOUGHT IT OF VALUE TO COMPARE NOTES OCCASIONALLY WITH ONE ANOTHER ON SUCH SUBJECTS. KHADDAM AGREED EMPHATICALLY AND COMMENTED "YOUR INFORMATION IS EXTREMELY PRECISE."

3. I OBSERVED THAT IN LAST FEW DAYS SOVIETS HAD ALTERED THE TONE OF THEIR PRESS COMMENTARY ABOUT SYRIA IN COURSE OF WELCOMING THE SYRO-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT. KHADDAM RETORTED THAT "THE SOVIETS WANT A POLITICAL RECONCILIATION PROVIDED WE WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON AND PERMIT JUMBLATT AND HIS ALLIES TO TAKE OVER THE AREAS WHICH SYRIAN FORCES PRESENTLY CONTROL." (HE NOTED IN PASSING

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THIS CONSTITUTED 60 PERCENT OF LEBANON.) "IN OTHER WORDS,"

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HE CONTINUED, "RECONCILIATION IS TO BE ON THE BASIS OF
THE WITHDRAWAL OF OUR FORCES SO THAT THE COMMUNISTS
COULD GET HOLD OF THOSE REGIONS." ASKED IF THIS WAS WHAT
THE SOVIETS HAD TOLD HIM IN MOSCOW, KHADDAM SAID, NO,
THIS WAS A MESSAGE PRESENTED DIRECTLY TO HIM EARLIER ON
AUGUST 3 BY SOVIET AMBASSADOR MOUKHITDINOV. HE THEN
AFFIRMED THAT SYRIA'S POSITION IS CLEAR AND SYRIA WOULD
CONTINUE TO KEEP ITS FORCES IN LEBANON UNTIL PEACE WAS
RESTORED. IT CONSIDERED ITS PRESENCE ESSENTIAL TO TERMINATE THE
PRESENT WAR WHICH WAS AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE
LEBANESE, PALESTINIAN AND ARAB PEOPLES.
MURPHY

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